

Colonel Steven A. Sliwa, U.S. Army
Director, Rapid Equipping Force
Fort Belvoir, Virginia



Colonel Steven Sliwa became the fifth Director of the U.S. Army's Rapid Equipping Force (REF) in August 2013. Reporting directly to the senior leadership of the Army, the REF harnesses current and emerging technologies to provide rapid solutions for urgent combat requirements faced by Soldiers on today's battlefield. The Department of the Army formed the REF in 2002 to support warfighter requirements in Afghanistan, and during the past ten years, the REF has met challenges as diverse as; defeating improvised explosive devices, increasing Army contingency operation energy efficiency, gathering blast effect data to better understand traumatic brain injury and improving ISR efforts in austere locations. As the U.S. Army adjusts to force reduction and realignment post Afghanistan, Sliwa prepares the REF, an evolving organization, to provide global support while maintaining focus on urgent requirements for the remaining units serving in Operation Enduring Freedom.

With 27 years in uniform, COL Sliwa has served in and commanded Field Artillery units at the platoon through brigade levels, and has performed fire support, maneuver, and stability operations. His operational assignments include Germany, Haiti, Iraq, and Korea. He participated in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Uphold Democracy and Iraqi Freedom. In addition to these operational assignments, he also served as National Security Fellow at the JFK School of Government at Harvard University and as a Strategic Planner on the Joint Staff. Prior to becoming the REF Director, he completed a second assignment on the Joint Staff. As the Assistant Deputy Director for Joint Strategic Planning, COL Sliwa synchronized activities for the development of the National Military Strategy, Chairman's Risk Assessment, Unified Command Plan, and Joint Operational War Plans. His efforts resulted in a broad range of responsive assessments and recommendations to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

COL Sliwa has received numerous military awards and decorations to include; the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (one Oak Leaf Cluster), the Bronze Star Medal (one Oak Leaf Cluster), the Army Superior Unit Award, (received for actions following the shelling of Yeonpyeong-Do Island by North Korea while commanding the 210th Fires Brigade), the Republic of Korea Order of National Security Merit Sam-Il Medal, the Combat Action Badge, the Air Force Space Badge and the Ranger Tab.

COL Sliwa was commissioned in 1986 from the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York and earned a Masters of Military Arts and Sciences in Military Space Applications from United States Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) in 1998.